

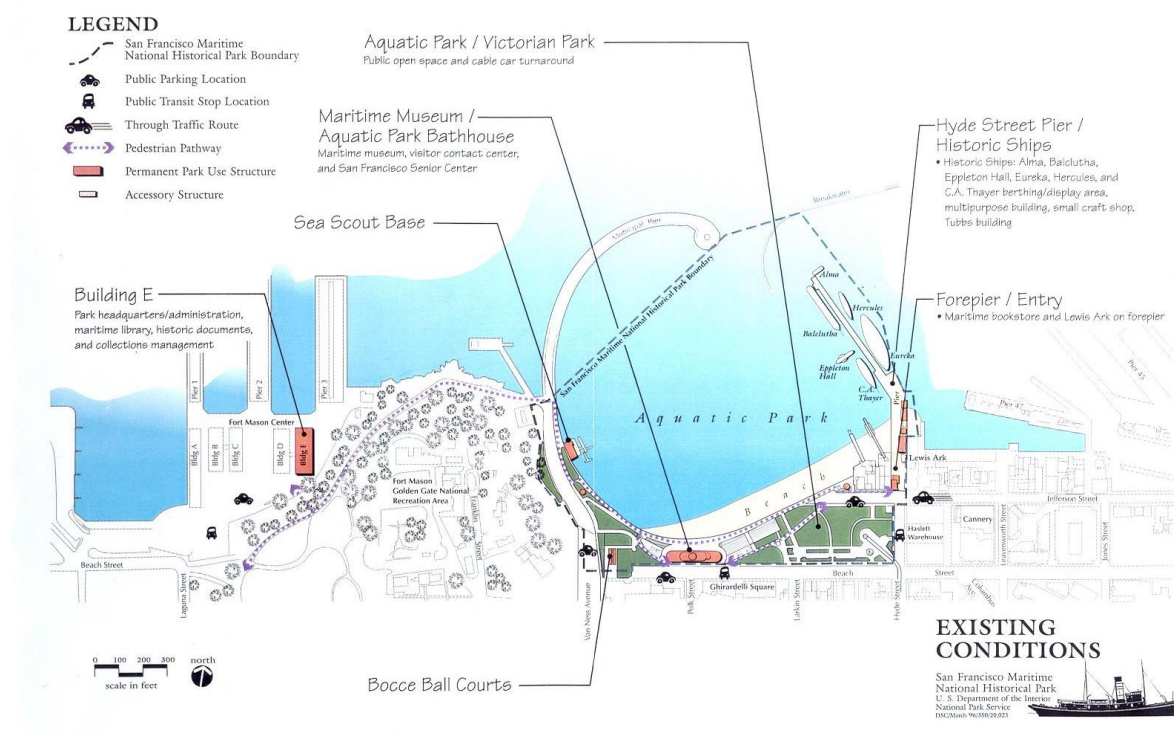
Report

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

1.0 Site Description

The San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (NHP) is a 37-acre park located at the west end of Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, California. The park includes an Aquatic Park, a Victorian park, and a recreation area with a quarter of a mile of beach and a swimming and rowing lagoon. The three main components of the park include the Hyde Street Pier, the National Maritime Museum, and the San Francisco Maritime Library (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park



The mission of the San Francisco Maritime NHP is “to collect, preserve, and interpret Pacific Coast maritime history in its own context and its influence on world trade in order to contribute to public appreciation and enjoyment.” The significance of the park is found in its collection of large vessels, small watercraft, artifacts, art, historic documents, books,

and museum object that are directly associated with the central role played by San Francisco Bay as the preeminent seaport in the maritime heritage of the Pacific Coast of the United States.

The Hyde Street Pier displays historic vessels including the 1886 square-rigger *Balclutha*, the 1895 schooner *C.A. Thayer* and the 1890 ferryboat *Eureka*. The public can board these three ships and view other smaller craft preserved at the pier, or participate in history, music and hands-on Ranger-led programs. Not far from the pier is the National Maritime Museum with displays of ship models and fine art, sailor crafts, and multimedia exhibits. The San Francisco Maritime Library houses maritime-related periodicals, access to ship plans, 22,000 books, 250,000 historic photographs, oral histories and manuscripts.

The San Francisco Maritime NHP is managed by the NPS, but the park has agreements and relationships with several nonprofit and legislated organizations that provide assistance and support in various forms. One of these organizations is the National Maritime Museum Association, which manages the World War II submarine *U.S.S. Pampanito* in Fisherman's Wharf, approximately five blocks from the Hyde Street Pier. Proceeds from the *Pampanito* exhibit are dedicated to her continued preservation and support many of the association's efforts on behalf of the park.

In 1998, 3,535,081 visitors were counted at the park. The busiest month of the year is typically July, which had 478,806 visitors in 1998. There are two kinds of visitors who visit the park: those who live in the neighborhood and use it as an urban park, and those who do not live in the area and are more typical recreation visitors. The people who are park's neighbors use the park at varied times and for various durations, but the typical nonresident park recreation visitor stays approximately four hours.

Some transportation plans have been created recently addressing the entire Fisherman's Wharf area, but no specific studies or plans have been conducted exclusively for the park. The park is operating under a 1997 General Management Plan (GMP) which addresses transportation within the park and discusses coordination with other plans for the Wharf area. GMP recommendations include the following:

- Restriction of vehicular traffic and parking during peak visitation hours on weekends at the intersection of Hyde and Jefferson Streets to create a pedestrian-oriented plaza. Through traffic will be deflected out of the Wharf area to Leavenworth Street.
- Maintenance of approximately 35 public parking spaces along west Beach Street and approximately 105 public parking spaces on lower Van Ness Avenue. Designate these spaces with four-hour parking limits during peak visitation hours.

Coordination with other plans discussed in the GMP include:

- Working with city to develop a multilevel parking garage at the foot of Van Ness Avenue to help offset the waterfront parking deficit. Work to improve parking capacities in this area of the waterfront.

- Working the city of San Francisco and local business interests to encourage local residents and visitors to use the existing alternative forms of transportation (bus, cable car, and light rail). Support-related transportation proposals in other plans including:
 - Opening the railroad tunnel under Fort Mason as an access to the maritime park from the Marina District and Presidio;
 - Extending the F-line rail system from Fisherman’s Wharf west through Aquatic Park to the Presidio; and
 - Establishing a water shuttle system to transport visitors to various sites, including the park, in the Fisherman’s Wharf area.

The main transportation-related issues for the park are as follows:

- Traffic congestion at the intersection of Hyde and Jefferson Streets. The heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic at this intersection, which is located near the pier and the pedestrian promenade, creates potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Limited parking is available on the park site, and parking availability in the surrounding area competes with all of the other activities and businesses in the surrounding Fisherman’s Wharf area. On the park site, there are relatively few metered visitor parking spaces. The surrounding area contains several public parking structures, but the structures are used by all visitors to the Fisherman’s Wharf area, not just by visitors to the park.
- Lack of employee access and parking. An employee shuttle is being considered for use in transporting employees from the park’s headquarters area to select locations within the park such as Hyde Street Pier and the Aquatic Park Bathhouse.

■ 2.0 Existing ATS

- The park and Fisherman’s Wharf area in general are highly accessible by various forms of mass transit including the municipal-run “MUNI” bus lines, the historic Hyde Street cable car and the F Line Rail system. There are two municipal bus stops located within the park boundaries, and the cable car comes directly into park, with the turn-around across the street from the future site of the Maritime Museum and park headquarters located in the Haslett Warehouse. The F line light rail, when completed, will stop within a few blocks of the park.

■ 3.0 ATS Needs

- The creation of a pedestrian plaza at the congested intersection of Hyde and Jefferson Streets would enhance the visitor experience. In order to do this successfully, traffic needs to be deflected from the park to other streets, and visitors need to be able to get from outlying parking lots to areas within the park.
- Access to visitor parking within a reasonable distance from the park needs to be more easily available. Limited parking is available on the park site, and parking availability in the surrounding area competes with all of the other activities and businesses in the surrounding Fisherman's Wharf area.
- The park needs a means of transporting park employees from parking areas outside the park to their place of employment within the park. A shuttle system is being considered for this purpose.
- The neighborhood areas surrounding the park would like to encourage visitors to use alternative forms of transportation. The park could benefit from the creation of a plan for encouraging Alternative Transportation Systems (ATS) use, and the creation of a plan to intercept visitors in their cars before they arrive at the park.
- Support other area plans including the plan for a water shuttle system serving all of the attractions in the Wharf area.

■ 4.0 Basis of ATS Needs

- The creation of a pedestrian plaza at the congested intersection of Hyde and Jefferson Streets would enhance the visitor experience.
- A shuttle system to transport employees from their cars parked in outlying parking structures to their place of employment would assist the park in the management of its operations.
- A water shuttle system serving the park and other nearby Wharf area attractions would enhance the visitor experience by increasing site accessibility, and reduce dependence on private vehicle use.
- Increased transit use would please neighborhood groups, who object to the traffic congestion in the park.

■ 5.0 Bibliography

San Francisco maritime National Historical Park. Internet site: <http://www.nps.gov/safr/>.
Information printed November 1999.

■ 6.0 Persons Interviewed

William G. Thomas, Superintendent, telephone interview, November 1999